

Letter from the Editor*Dear Emerging Leaders!*

Welcome to the tenth edition of the ELPost! In this edition, Linh Duong shares her unique rotation experience in Thailand, we bid farewell to the Class of 2008, discuss ELP and ELAB leadership changes, and glean valuable insight from two former ELs who share their experiences in our "Alumni Spotlight." Ken Miller's "We Don't Make Widgets," is featured in "Read This." Miller examines the way we perceive government services and how they are carried out. Miller argues that a simple change in mindset can drastically improve government operations. Finally, The ELAB Networking Committee shares tips for getting the most out of your networking opportunities.

Jae Brown, CDC 2009 will be taking over the ELPost next year. It has been my pleasure getting to work with you, learn from you, and share in your experiences with the EL Program the EL Post.

All the Best!

Jessica Jenkins

CMS 2008

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EL POST STAFF**Editor****Jessica Jenkins, CMS 2008****Edition 7 Contributing Writers**

Linh Duong, CDC 2009
Linda Kwon, HRSA 2009
Meghan Ochal, CMS 2009

Farewell Emerging Leaders***Class of 2008!***

On July 24, families, friends, and co-workers gathered in the Hubert Humphrey Building in Washington, D.C. to celebrate the graduation of the class of 2008. CMS Deputy Administrator Herb Kuhn addressed the crowd and reflected and remarked upon the contributions made to public health by the Class of 2008.

EL SPOTLIGHT
A World Away
Linh Duong, CDC 2009

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) plays an integral role in preventing and controlling the spread of disease in the U.S. and around the world. In order to understand the public health impact that CDC has globally, one must experience first hand the programs and interventions that exist abroad through the many CDC collaborative efforts and partnerships. As a result, a broad vision for the future of public health can develop.

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During my second rotation, I worked with the Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention (DHAP) at the CDC. The Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention supports the HIV/AIDS Program (HAP) of the Thailand MOPH - US CDC Collaboration, located in Nonthaburi, Thailand. HAP conducts HIV prevention research in several groups at risk for HIV infection, among others men who have sex with men (MSM) in Thailand. Part of this research are repeated bi-annual cross-sectional assessments of HIV prevalence and risk behavior among MSM and an ongoing longitudinal cohort study of HIV incidence in preparation for a clinical trial of oral chemoprophylaxis of HIV infection. Data include 1) sexual risk behaviors, sexual hygiene, drug use, HIV/AIDS knowledge and preventive practices, 2) laboratory and self-report data on HIV and a variety of sexually transmitted diseases, and 3) measures of willingness to participate in trials of biomedical interventions to prevent HIV infection. As part of my rotation with DHAP, I worked with DHAP-SE and TUC personnel on analysis of data from these studies and developed a manuscript describing the results.

In addition, I conducted a site visit at the Ministry of Public Health with CDC, Thailand/Thailand US CDC Collaboration (TUC) Behavioral Research Team, TUC -- to meet with study coordinators and project collaborators on the DHAP/EB HIV prevention research studies, to continue with data analysis and interpretation of risk behaviors among MSM in ongoing longitudinal cohort study dataset, and to complete a site visit at the Silom Clinic, the study site of the Bangkok MSM Cohort Study to meet with project collaborators where the study participants are enrolled.

This experience has allowed me to gain valuable insight into public health research conducted on an international scale and as a result, I will be able to use this knowledge to assist with future rotations which involve research conducted internationally. The Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention does remarkable work with HIV/AIDS research both domestic and international and I am proud to have been a part of this public health effort to increase the life years and quality of life for all persons, domestically and internationally.

Photos (opposite side) courtesy of Linh Duong



The Department of Disease Control, Thailand



Linh with Supaporn Chaikummao, Silom Community Clinic Manager and an Ora-Quick tester used to diagnose HIV infection



Linh at the Silom Community Clinic in Thailand where patients are enrolled for the longitudinal HIV/AIDS Cohort Study

ELAB

The Emerging Leaders Alumni Board (ELAB) promotes and facilitates leadership development, networking, mentoring and information sharing. Membership is open to alumni and current members of the Emerging Leaders Program.

ELAB is seeking individuals to serve on committees and in leadership roles including.

- ELAB Co-Chair for either the Washington, DC area and/or Atlanta act as a liaison between the group and the Emerging Leaders Program. It is the Co-Chair(s) responsibility to promote ELAB's mission and support the various committees.
- The EL Post Assistant Editor supports a newsletter to promote and feature ELP relevant topics including, events and accomplishments, alumni spotlights, upcoming trainings, and related news/topics.
- ELAB Secretary is responsible for informing and/or communicating with the Committee Points of Contact (POCs) about upcoming meetings and archiving information.

If you are interested in volunteering or learning more about the leadership positions, please contact Liz Hammond, 2008/2009 ELAB Co-Chair (DC) at elizabeth.hammond@cms.hhs.gov or 410-786-7440.

Interested in contributing to the ELPost!?

If you are interested in what's going on with Emerging Leaders past and present, we're looking for ELPost writers alumni, supervisors and mentors who to be feature; EL contributions to HHS and your ideas for articles.

Please contact jae.brown@hhs.gov

ELAB committees serve a vital role in support of ELAB's mission to facilitate leadership development, networking, mentoring and information sharing. If you are interested in participating in a committee, please contact the Point of Contact (POCs) listed after the appropriate committee:

ELAB COMMITTEE POINTS-OF-CONTACT

Professional Development

The Professional Development Committee plans activities to supplement Emerging Leaders' experiences and training/information on leadership competencies.

Giovanna Guerrero

Giovanna.Guerrero@nih.hhs.gov

Networking

The Networking Committee plans activities as a venue for both current and former Emerging Leaders to meet and share information.

Jewell Martin

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Constituent Services

The Constituent Services Committee keeps the ELAB community connected through the management of the Alumni Directory.

Peter Edelman

peter.edelman@acf.hhs.gov

Peer Mentoring

The Peer Mentoring Committee facilitates the relationship of alumni and incoming (freshman) Emerging Leaders.

Erin Bain

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EL Post

The EL Post is a newsletter to promote and feature ELP relevant topics including, but not limited to upcoming ELAB and/or other events.

Jae Brown

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EL Alumni Spotlight

Amanda Reyes – HRSA 2005

Interviewed by Meghan Ochal – CMS 2009

Amanda Reyes, EL class of 2005, began the ELP with the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) in the Administrative Track. She is still at HRSA, but has had a range of interesting experiences while in the ELP and over the last few years. Thanks to Amanda for taking the time to answer my questions!

What is your current OPDIV/office and position? What do you do in your position?

I'm currently working in the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Bureau of Primary Health Care (BPHC), Office of Policy and Program Development.

More specifically, I'm in the policy branch of the community health center program, where we write documents that help answer grantee questions, help people when they have policy questions about the health center program, and "other duties as assigned."

Where did you start out in the ELP and in what other offices did you complete rotations?

I started out in HRSA, in the Office of Federal Assistance Management (OFAM), Division of Independent Review (DIR). While I was in the ELP, I rotated through the Administration on Aging and NIH, National Library of Medicine (In the History of Medicine Division), and the HRSA Philadelphia Regional Office.

It wasn't a rotation, but about 2 years ago, I transferred to HRSA's Office of Performance Review (OPR), Dallas Regional Division (the region includes Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, and New Mexico). In the regional office, I worked with different organizations that HRSA has given money to, and helped them improve their program performance. This past July, I transferred back to headquarters into my current position. (I've been really lucky with the transfers! My bosses/bosses' bosses have been great in knowing the right people to talk to, giving me introductions/recommendations, and maybe most importantly, figuring out the paperwork!)

What is your academic/professional background prior to the ELP? What led you to the ELP?

I worked for a non-profit – my job was helping other health and human service non-profits with data, research, and program evaluation. After working there for a couple of years, I couldn't progress without an advanced degree. Since I wanted to see into the "black

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Kathryn Hambleton, HRSA '08 and Helmut Huber, CMS '08

Class of 2008 Photos

Photos courtesy of Heather Brink



Federico Hudson, Heather Brink, and Louis Saddler II, all CDC '08



Chantelle Britton, CMS '08 and Tamekia Taylor, CDC '08

READ THIS:***We Don't Make Widgets****Overcoming the Myths that Keep Government from Radically Improving*

By Ken Miller

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box" of federal government funding, I went to Maryland for graduate work in public policy. There was an alumna there who came to talk about the Emerging Leaders Program – it sounded like a great opportunity, so I applied. The rest is history.

Where are you from originally? And what did you want to be when you grew up?

I'm from the Philadelphia area – I grew up outside of Philly, went to college in Philly, and worked in Philly after graduation. I wanted to be lots of different things, but I have to admit that public policy and federal government were no where on the list. It just goes to show you that you never know what life has in store!

What are the main differences between working in a regional office versus at a main office/headquarters? Any pros/cons you want to share about each?

I really enjoyed working in Dallas. The best part was really being where the "rubber hits the road." When you're in the giving money away end of government, sometimes the dollars get a little abstract. Being out in the regions (and partly because of the job I had) you really got to see where the money was going and the positive impact it had on people's lives.

Because Federal Government doesn't dominate the conversation, it also felt like there was a greater diversity in viewpoints in the office. My coworkers in Dallas were fantastic (for many reasons) but one of the great things was how their work was informed by local and regional perspectives. Also, I think because there were fewer feds in general, it felt like there was more cross-communication.

As a con, there's sometimes an "us" (the region) vs. "them" (headquarters) mentality. There are things you can do to alleviate that – for example, OPR liberally used videoconferencing, cross-regional/headquarters projects, and e-rooms. But there will always be hurdles with the geographic distance. (Things as simple as time zone differences can get in the way.)

What was your favorite thing about Dallas? What's the biggest difference between Dallas and DC?

Tex-Mex! And everything really is bigger, except for the cost-of-living and the public transportation system. Winter in Dallas is often lovely, too – I remember one brilliantly warm day in December there, sitting outside, enjoying the sunshine, and eating tacos. I really don't think that's going to happen this December.

What advice would you give current ELs?

This is a super-practical note: have a "nutshell" explanation of what you do – the sort of thing you can say in ten seconds at a noisy party, when someone is making small talk and asks "So, what do you do?" This has saved me from more awkward, acronym-filled moments than I can count.

At the moment, where do you see yourself in 10 years?

Taking a nap? But seriously, I have a friend who is nearing the end of her federal career, and I've decided that I want to be her when I "grow up." She has an amazing work-life balance, and while she enjoys her job, it doesn't define her as a person. Maybe I'll reach that in ten years!

What do you like to do in your free time?

Now that I'm back on the East Coast, I like visiting with friends and family that I haven't seen in a while. Admittedly, though, most of my free time is being spent unpacking, fixing up our place, and exploring our new neighborhood.

What are 3 things that every visitor to Dallas should see/do?

Only three things? Yikes!

- 1) Don't forget the other half of "The Metroplex," Fort Worth! I would definitely go to the Fort Worth Cultural District. It's worth it if only so you can check out two architectural masterpieces – The Modern Art Museum (designed by Tadao Ando) and the Kimbell (designed by Louis Kahn.)
- 2) You can't visit Texas without eating Tex-Mex and BBQ. For Tex-Mex, my favorite is Mia's (Try the Brisket Tacos!) and for BBQ I can't decide between Sonny Bryan's or Pappas BBQ. Also, this isn't Tex-Mex or BBQ, but La Duni has a quatro leches cake that's amazing.
- 3) Each region of Texas has its own personality, and Dallas is at its most "Dallas-y" when it's shopping – check out the original Neiman Marcus in downtown Dallas or the North Park Mall, if only for the people watching.

EL Alumni Spotlight

**Erica Pearson, MPH – HRSA 2007***Interviewed by Linda Kwon – HRSA 2009*

What attracted you to the Emerging Leaders Program?

I heard about the EL Program in my first year as a public health student at George Washington and attended a career fair at the Humphrey Building. Although I wasn't eligible to apply for the Program that year, I was inspired by two aspects of the program. On the one side, it offered the opportunity to serve in our nation's public health care system. After working on public health issues overseas as a Peace Corps Volunteer, I was eager to better understand our own public health infrastructure. I loved international development, but felt that I needed to better understand the US system before offering my assistance overseas. The opportunity to work in several public health agencies and get the big picture view of HHS was a huge selling point. Secondly, the EL Program offered a great deal of support for professional development through trainings and mentoring.

How have your rotations helped you become a better public health professional and leader?

I learned a great deal from my rotations in the EL Program. On the one hand I was exposed to several different leadership styles and team environments. This enables me to better handle situations and anticipate issues that come up in my current office. In addition, having an understanding of the variety of issues that I worked on in my rotations has positioned me to take the lead on those issues in my current office. Finally, the people I met and connections I made were invaluable. If I need advice from an expert on substance abuse prevention, mental health, evaluation, rural health, Medicaid, or many other issues, they are only a phone call away!

Since you have graduated from the program, what have you been doing?

I am currently in HRSA's Bureau of Health Professions (BHP) in the Office of the Associate Administrator and am lucky enough to work for my mentor from the EL

Program. As a public health analyst, I work on a variety of different programs and projects within BHP. I am the lead for a [new grant program](#) that supports "patient navigators," who are lay health workers assisting people prevent and manage chronic disease. I also managed the implementation of our [BHP All-Programs Meeting](#) which brought together nearly 1200 people to share best practices and learn about the current initiatives in the area of health professions. Other projects include working with the members of BHP's four advisory committees to make recommendations surrounding interdisciplinary education and serving as the HRSA project officer to support an Institute of Medicine [workshop on the U.S. oral health workforce](#).

What would you want the incoming class to know about that you wish you had known before joining the federal government?

People love to talk about what they do. Don't be afraid to ask for advice or opinions from those you come across. As an Emerging Leader, you have a wonderful excuse to reach out to anyone in the Department and ask them about what they do and how they recommend you proceed with your own career.

I get extremely nervous when it comes to public speaking. Do you have any advice on how to become more comfortable speaking in front of large groups?

Well, I did theater when I was younger, so I love speaking in front of groups. BUT, that doesn't mean I don't get incredibly nervous. I love it when I'm able to turn that nervous energy into an energetic, interesting presentation. I find that when I look out into the crowd, making eye contact with as many people as possible is important. The audience will tell you what you need to know about your presentation with their eyes. Are they confused? Excited? Bored? Content? In addition, the audience is usually very supportive. I also find that they appreciate you checking in with them and acknowledging their own expertise and background on the subject that you are addressing.

Why do you think it is important to have mentors and a strong network in our career?

No matter how much experience you have, you can never know it all. Having and utilizing your networks pushes you to the next level and opens doors that you may not have known existed before.

Lastly, I'm sure inquiring minds would like to know more about your goals and aspirations. What would you like to accomplish in this lifetime?

I was never one of those kids who knew what they wanted to be when they grew up. However, I have come across several experiences that have sparked my

interest and passion. I believe that we need to listen to and follow those sparks when they present themselves. One of the first goals that comes to mind is giving back to my Peace Corps village. I am traveling back to Ecuador in October for 3 weeks and have hopes of starting a scholarship fund for the kids in my community. In the village of Agua Clara, the school only goes up to 3rd grade. If the children want to continue their education, they have to leave their homes every week and study in another village. In a town with a median income of about \$25/month, that is not a reality for most. They supported me so much in the 2 years that I lived there that I believe it's time for me to give back. Another spark came from visiting a community health center (CHC) on a HRSA review. These HRSA grantees make such an impact in the communities they serve. I would love to one day run a CHC. However, as long as I continue to believe in the mission and am pursuing my passions, I am totally open to where the road takes me.

BE THE CHANGE
"It's not what they take away from you that counts. It's what you do with what you have left."

-Hubert Humphrey



It's Combined Federal Campaign time again,
 So think about your favorite charities.
 You can use the Resource Booklet
 Or search the CFC website with ease.

You can give to a local or national group
 Or an organization that serves the world.
 From animals to illnesses, there are
 Charities that serve men, women, boys, & girls.

For more information, visit
www.opm.gov/CFC



Be Prepared and Know Your Audience. Networking with your peers will be different than networking with senior staff. **People aren't mind readers** and unless you take the initiative to voice your goals and ambitions, it may be harder for people to help you succeed.

Ask open-ended questions and listen with sincere interest. Engage people by asking exploratory questions that begin with "Why", "What" or "How". These kinds of questions can help generate new thoughts and ideas that can help you and/or your organization grow, especially when you are genuinely interested.

Be Willing to Give, Not Just Take. Be willing not only to get new contacts, but **to connect other people with your contacts** and offer help however you can give it. Building effective relationships thrives on genuine reciprocity. What you are willing to give will determine what you get.

Take risks and constantly meet new people. Wherever you go, whether it is a planning meeting or waiting in line for coffee, strike up a casual conversation, even if it is **out of your comfort zone**. You never know if the person sitting or standing right next to you can open a window of opportunity for you or even help you become a better leader!

Follow-up and keep in touch. Don't stash that business card or contact info so far deep in your drawer that you'll forget about it for days, months or even years! **Send that person an email** every once in a while to see how things are going.

Presented by: ELAB Networking Committee, 2008